

## Hoop There It Is: The Trend That's Taking Us Into 2017

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Source: National Jeweler

New York--A hoop earring never goes out of style, but it can experience a major resurgence, which is exactly what is happening now.

"Hoop earrings are so on trend right now," said Stone Paris designer Marie Poniatowski, who is known for her never-take-off "creoles" that incorporate religious symbols like Byzantine crosses. "They are so easy to wear and complete every look. We do especially well with micro-hoops."

The micro-hoop or huggie, named for its close fit to the earlobe, has been the herald of the hoop's renewed popularity over the past few years, coinciding with the rise in upscale multiple piercings by piercing artists like J. Colby Smith of New York Adorned and piercer/designer Maria Tash.



"Given that multiple piercings have become more mainstream, people have become more creative, building personalized, unique 'earring stories,' often incorporating hoops," said designer Melissa Kaye, who creates a host of hoop sizes. "For example, wearing smaller huggie hoops in second and third piercings, wearing multiple hoops in the same ear (has become a trend)."

Designer Marc Alary's latest collection (left) introduced enamel rings in patterns that continue the safari-esque feel of his animal jewelry, albeit in a more universally-appealing manner. For Alary, transitioning from rings to hoop earrings was a natural progression, and one that has resonated with his devotees.

"Many people have multiple piercings and hoops can be stacked on the ear the same way people stack rings on their fingers," he said.

Ariel Gordon Jewelry's huggie-style hoops have been so popular among the designer's customer base that she has introduced several iterations of them, playing with different gemstones and variations of diamond cuts, and even shrinking the style down for the client looking for a super-close-to-the-ear fit.

"I love the versatility of a hoop," said Ariel Gordon. "I'm so busy, so I need something that transitions from day to night easily. I particularly love a huggie because I can sleep in them, which means I'm always ready."



Huggies: Stone Paris's Yesterday 18-karat yellow gold hoops with diamonds (\$479 per single)





Designer Beth Miller of Beth Miller Collections also cited the ease of wearing a huggie as part of its appeal, noting that in 2016, the style was as in-demand as a classic stud earring.

“I’ve always loved a good hoop,” she said. “Our updated huggies are the perfect day-to-night earrings to wear to yoga class and out to dinner. They’re an alternative to the classic stud with an awesome price point.”

Jess Hannah of J. Hannah has embraced the maximalist mood of fashion, with its move away from dainty, stacking pieces to bolder looks with hefty, tactile hoop earrings, huggie-style included.

“The hoop earring is such a nostalgic, distinct shape and style,” Hannah opined. “To me, the shape is a total classic but I think trend-wise it speaks to a pivot away from tiny, overly dainty pieces and toward those that feel a little more substantive and sturdy.”

Fine jewelry brand Wwake gained a cult following with its unique take on miniscule pieces of jewelry, scaled to showcase tiny diamonds and gemstones, but designer Wing Yau is also feeling a move toward more expressive styles, going so far as to rebrand and expand upon some of her larger costume pieces under the label Closer by Wwake.

Even for her fine label, Yau is playing with size, embracing large hoop earrings that were de rigueur in the 1990s.

“A lot of our customers experimented with wearing hoops when they were teens, and so bringing them back now feels nostalgic and fun,” she said. “I personally love them from a sculptural standpoint; they can be voluminous and also introduce a lot of movement.”

**Bigger is Better**

As the hoop trend has expanded from huggies to also encompass larger styles, designers have felt the freedom to interpret the category through their unique aesthetic lenses.

Azlee’s Baylee Zwart creates both huggies and larger hoop earrings in a clean, geometric style that is consistent with her brand ethos.

“Since hoops have been around forever, customers want something a little bit different,” she said. “Our Circuit Hoops have been one of our best sellers because they are unexpected and dynamic but still an everyday, easy-to-wear hoop.”

She doesn’t sacrifice design for comfort, placing special emphasis on maintaining the wearability consumers equate with hoop earrings.

“A big selling point for our Circuit V Hoops is that they are so comfortable you can sleep in them, since they don’t have a post sticking out the back,” Zwart said. “A lot of customers just never take them off. A hoop is a staple, so it should be a piece people don’t feel like they have to take on and off, so making them easy to wear is crucial.”

Statement Hoops: Maniazamani’s black rhodium-plated 18-karat gold hoop earrings with emeralds (\$14,600)





The team behind Barrio Neal, Anna Barrio and Page Neal, also are enjoying the turn of the tide to larger hoops and the creativity that size affords them.

“We just released our Circ Hoops,” the designers explained via e-mail, “a large zig-zag design inspired by Calder mobiles. We wanted to introduce hoops that are large, playful and have a graceful mobility. I think customers are looking for hoops that veer away from the traditional loop.”

Indeed, consumers’ familiarity with hoops allows jewelers to push the boundaries of the traditional shape, without alienating a classic clientele.

“I have noticed that women love our hoops in rainbow colors in all sizes,” said Shebee Gems’ Ann Spence. “A hoop wardrobe of different shapes, colors and metals is a great way to express personal style.”

“Hoops are so easy,” Spence continued, “but they can still pack a statement punch.”

Alary also has noticed the demand for larger hoops from his customers. “I have received a very strong reaction from my clients,” he explained. “People really liked (my enamel huggies) but very rapidly customers asked me if I would make them bigger and larger. I myself started to be obsessed with hoops and would take mental notes every time I would see a woman in the street wearing a cool pair of hoops.”

Like many brands, Walters Faith creates varying sizes of hoops to meet the market’s demand.

“Hoops, to us, are a classic style and a must have in every woman’s jewelry collection,” said Stephanie Abramow, one half of the design duo behind the brand. “Hoops look great on everyone. Our hoops come in several sizes--we love our Clive huggie by day and our Saxon chain link hoop at night.”

Designer Catherine Weitzman echoed this, saying “Hoops are such a timeless jewelry staple. I love designing various interpretations to keep them looking unique and relevant.”

Meanwhile, Kirsty Stone, who has garnered buzz for her brand Retrouvaí among buyers since winning Ylang23’s The Next Now competition earlier this year, summed up the trend’s appeal.

“The hoop is a true American staple as far as I’m concerned,” said Stone. “There are so many variations in terms of volume and embellishment, we can all find our match in a pair, or five.”